

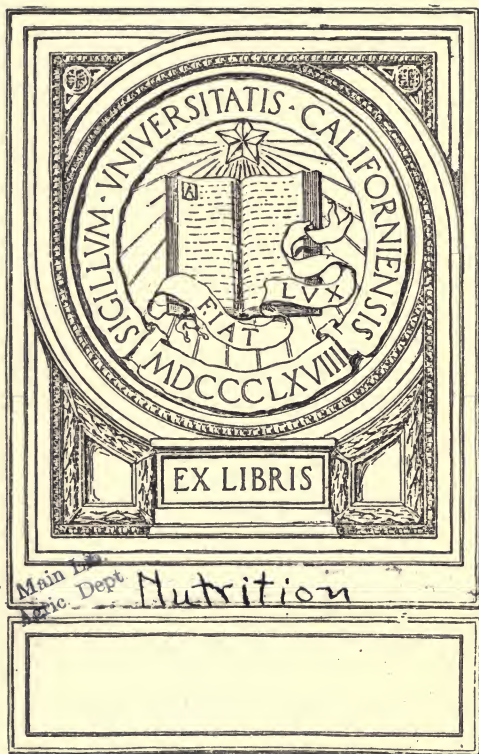
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HOW TO EAT A CURE FOR "NERVES"

THOMAS CLARK HINKLE, M.D.





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HOW TO EAT
A CURE FOR "NERVES"

“Whosoever wishes to eat much must eat little.” Cornaro, in saying this, meant that if a man wished to eat for a great many days—that is, desired a long life—he must eat only a little each day.

HOW TO EAT

A CURE FOR "NERVES"

By

THOMAS CLARK HINKLE, M. D.



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“Nature, desirous to preserve man in good health as long as possible, informs him herself how he is to act in time of illness; for she immediately deprives him, when sick, of his appetite in order that he may eat but little.”

—CORNARO

THE INTRODUCTION

This author-physician's cure for "nerves" vividly recalls the simplicity of method employed in the complete restoration to health of one of olden time whose story has come ringing down the ages in the Book of Books. Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, a mighty man of valor and honorable in the sight of all men, turned away in a rage when Elisha, the prophet of the Most High, prescribed for his dread malady a remedy so simple that it was despised in his eyes. But "his servants came near and said . . . 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?'"

In "How to Eat" the author offers the sufferer from "nerves" a remedy as simple as that Elisha offered Naaman. He gives him an opportunity to profit by his well-tested knowledge that over-eating and *rapidity* in eating are ruinous to health and shorten life.

It is seldom that there emanates from the pen of a doctor a book which, concerning any physical disorder, minimizes the efforts of the medical practitioner. While this author-physician gives full credit to the conscientious physician for the great service he is able to render in all other spheres of his profession, he wholly denies the necessity for medical care in cases of nervous breakdown, and discounts liberally the benefits

to be derived from professional advice except in so far as the doctor is the patient's counselor and dictator as to what and how and how much he shall eat and drink, and the way he shall employ his time.

Any discourse is valuable which incites a man having a marked tendency to depressing, morbid ideas, to rid himself of them. Dr. Hinkle helps the sufferer to gain that confidence and cheer which result from knowledge of certain immunity from dreaded ills and positive assurance of recovery by mere regulation of food or employment along the lines of simple, everyday living.

But that alone is not sufficient. It is made quite clear that no one thing by itself will insure a cure of "nerves." The cure must come through common sense exerted along several related avenues of endeavor. No matter how steadfastly one may adhere to directions as to abstaining from harmful food and injurious methods of partaking of those foods which are beneficial, if he spends the larger portion of his time idly rocking in a convenient arm chair, exerting neither body nor mind nor will, that which might be gained by proper nutrition is largely nullified by lack of physical exercise and mental activity.

That this little book may serve as a spur to the bodily self-denial and self-repression and the intellectual and spiritual uplift which make for character-building, is the very evident goal of its writer. From self-analysis and self-cure he

has worked out a philosophy—a system or *art*—by which those afflicted with nervous breakdown may be healed. And by putting into print the result of his practical experiments in diet and exercise he has broadened immeasurably the scope of his helpfulness to all nervebound sufferers by placing within their reach the simplest of measures by which release is secured from a condition which wholly incapacitates for active service or even for quiet, everyday usefulness.

It is because the things Dr. Hinkle advises are so commonplace, and because the doing of them day after day, year in and year out, is so monotonous, that people will be tempted to disregard or make light of their helpfulness. But the commonplace things which make up life are all important, as Susan Coolidge has so aptly expressed in these lines which fittingly illustrate the author's thought:

“The commonplace sun in the commonplace sky
Makes up the commonplace day.
The moon and the stars are commonplace things,
And the flower that blooms and the bird that sings;
But dark were the world, and sad our lot
If the flowers failed, and the sun shone not;
And God, who studies each separate soul,
Out of commonplace lives makes his beautiful whole.”

It therefore behooves the sufferer from “nerves” and that great host of others who are in danger of a nervous breakdown if they do not speedily mend their ways of eating and living, to heed the kindly

admonitions and follow the precepts of this author who practices what he preaches. By persistently doing commonplace things in the most commonplace way, keeping ever in mind the great objects to be attained thereby—good health, good cheer, and increased usefulness throughout a long life—the reader of this little treatise will find it worth many, many times its size, weight, and bulk. And heeding the author's admonition, "Go thou and do likewise," he will not shorten his life or lose it altogether in fruitless quests for the strength and nerve vigor which constantly elude him because of lack of self-control and failure to persist in the simple but efficacious measures of relief here outlined.

M. F. S.

I. WHERE THE TROUBLE LIES

“What we leave after making a hearty meal does us more good than what we have eaten.”

—CORNARO

HOW TO EAT

A CURE FOR "NERVES"

I. WHERE THE TROUBLE LIES

It is now over twenty years since I had my first nervous breakdown. About ten years later I had another, far worse than the first one. The first lasted six months; the second a little more than two and one half years. Doubtless if I had not in the strangest way in the world found out how to cure myself it would have lasted until now, unless death in the meantime had come to my relief. But right here I want to say that if you are looking for some new or miraculous treatment for such unfortunate people you might as well close the book now, for you will be disappointed. There is a cure for "nerves" but the cure is as old as the world. The trouble with poor deluded mortals — doctors included — is, we

are constantly looking for a miracle to cure us, but if we look back on all the real cures that we have ever heard about, we shall find they were as simple as the sun or the rain. And in the name of common sense let me ask: what is the difference *how* we are cured if we *are* cured and are *happy* as a result of it? Is n't that enough? Most certainly it is.

And now, as we journey along through the pages of this book, I want you to know that these words have been written by one who has nothing to offer you except human experience. As we proceed you will notice that every statement is tremendously positive. When a man has been through this literal hell of "nerves" he knows all about it and what can be done for it. And so when I tell you the things you must do to get well and *stay well*, I want you to understand that I know. There is absolutely no theory to be found in these pages. If you put

your finger in the fire you burn it. You don't have to take your finger out of the fire, call in a lot of learned gentlemen and say to them: "Now tell me your candid opinion about my finger. Is it burned or is it not?"

And I am just as positive about my cure of "nerves" as you could be that fire burned your finger. That brings me to what I want to say about the so-called "rest cures" at the sanitariums. It is a well-known fact that if a case of "nerves" is pronounced cured at a sanitarium the cure is only temporary. Sooner or later every one of these patients goes down hill again.

And remember I am talking about people who have nervous breakdowns **THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN**. I have no time to spare for the person who has brought on his own trouble. I am chiefly concerned with that host of children in America—and there is a host, I am sorry

to say — born of what I choose to call “pre-nervous” parents. The girls of such parents frequently break down in high school. And many of the finest boys that I know have this dreadful “thing” fastened firmly upon them just at the very beginning of their lifework.

You may think I am a little vehement, but to me one of the most damnable and disgusting things in the world is that the medical profession remains so ignorant concerning the *real cure* for such cases. I believe the late Sir William Osler was the greatest physician of his generation. He was not only a man of talent, he was a genius, and his knowledge of medicine almost passes understanding. Yet Osler himself was as much in the dark concerning the *real cure* for so-called *neurasthenia* as the physicians who read his works on practice. If one wants to find out how ignorant the whole profession is on the subject of a permanent cure, let

the thing get hold of him, and then let him make the rounds of the physicians, follow out their advice, and see where he comes out!

I have said that even the sanitariums of this country—and for that matter I might have said of any other country—do not *permanently cure* these people. I have ample proof of this statement. I have met these people everywhere and no doubt you have, too. Quite recently the subject was brought up anew to me. I had written an article on the subject for one of the magazines, a magazine having a large circulation. In a very short time my mail was literally flooded with letters. Every incoming mail brought great numbers of them. They came from physicians of the regular school, and from physicians of many other schools, too. I won't mention any of them, for this is a treatise on a dreadful affliction and how one may get rid of it; it is not intended as a criticism of anyone.

I have no desire to criticize and I haven't time. I am stating facts interwoven with my own life. If the cure is real, the people will find it out after they have tried it; if it is not, they will also find that out. In fact, it's exactly as Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul, said to the men of Israel when they would have slain the apostles for teaching Christ's sayings, "Refrain from these men and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." And it's exactly the same way with this healing art. The very fact that physicians of all schools of medicine—physicians who were sufferers from "nerves"—wrote me, shows plainly that they could not heal themselves. I have many letters from people who have been in sanitariums for years and who still have "nerves." The sanitariums do some people a lot of good, but they cannot remove the *cause* of nervousness. I am certain that the very

best rest cure for women is the one Dr. Weir Mitchell first used. But such women are sure to go down again and again and still again if that is *all* that is done for them.

Now frankly, if Christian Science could cure such cases and make them *stay* cured I should want a practitioner of this cult to treat them. But Christian Science simply cannot cure them because the underlying cause of this trouble is *physical*, not *mental*. In other words, the mind becomes ill because the body is made ill by certain poisons, and the nature of the disease is so peculiar that most of these miserable sufferers will not even try a thing unless some one brings them overwhelming evidence of its having wrought a cure. Or, if they do try it, they usually quit the treatment before nature has had time to do her work and set their bodies right.

I have the most profound sympathy for such people. I want to speak directly

to them. That is the task that I have set myself in this work. I want to talk directly to those of you who are sufferers from "nerves." I see you in every state, in every city, in every village, and throughout the farming districts of this country. I have received letters from many farmers who are suffering with this "thing." To them let me say, I know just how you feel, and from the very bottom of my heart I pity you. I know the horrible suffering of each one of you. I don't care what your ambition has been or is. I don't care what your situation in life may be. I don't care how rich or how poor you are. I don't care how much trouble you have had, or the nature of it. I want you to know these words are being written by one who knows more about your sufferings than you can imagine. I want you to believe this, because it is true. If you have longed and prayed for death, remember that the one who is writing

these words also has longed and prayed for death. But one thing you must be sure to remember: while you are waiting and trying to get well you must have *patience*.

I recollect one beautiful day in early spring when traveling in Nebraska I passed a little cemetery. How sweet and restful the place seemed, and as I looked out over those little white stones I prayed silently that the great God who made me would not hold me much longer on earth, that He would soon grant me the rest and peace which I believed was to be found only in death and the grave. But *remember this*: In those dark days never for a moment did I think of taking my own life! These words may reach some one who has had such a thought. If so, I say to you that to take one's life is the most cowardly thing a human being can do. This is the only place where I feel like being severe with you people. Shame on the man or woman

who will not go on to the end fighting honorably! And now if you have ever given thought to such a thing, blot it from your mind forever. I can see how these miserable people might long for death, as I did. But no matter how we may long for release through death, the God of nature must be the judge of our time of going.

Now this brings me to what I want to say about such sufferers going insane. Believe me, they never do! Remember this always. You won't become insane. You couldn't if you tried! In letter after letter among the flood of them I have had from all over this country and Canada, I read how the poor sufferer feared he or she might be going insane. I know, poor souls, just how you feel. That feeling is, I think, the most dreadful of all things connected with "nerves." I suffered from it for years. It is a dreadful feeling, but there is not the least bit of danger of such a thing happening to you. You will *not* go

insane. Such persons can't. Do you really get me? Such persons cannot go insane. This disease is nothing but what we call a functional nervous trouble. And so forget about the danger of insanity for all time. You can be cured, but you will make your return to health just that much slower by harboring this fear. And it would be simply foolish for you to go on thinking it possible after I—let me say it again—after I have told you that it cannot happen. For the value of this treatise lies in the "I." Its value is just like that of the treatise by Cornaro. He lived it. And so likewise have I lived it. I have been laid low with this malady. I have staggered in black despair with staring eyes and bleeding feet and crying soul along this road strewn with thorns and stones. I know what it is to lie awake all night and cry like a baby, with none to know and none to tell me what to do. I know what it is to be tremendously

ambitious. Ambition! Ambition! Ah, God of Heaven! How a poor soul suffers who beyond everything else, craves to be able to do something big in this world because he knows he should, yet is held down by this dreadful thing, "nerves!" And how little, how unspeakably little, do physicians, even the greatest of them, know, actually know, how we suffer, unless indeed there be one in whose own body the fiend has sunk deep its talons.

After I had my first breakdown I made up my mind to study medicine because something told me that I was one of those "peculiar" people who just *think* there is something the matter with them. Is it not strange that with all the advance that has been made in general medicine, little or nothing has been done for the relief of the people born with this curse hanging over them?

I wish this book could be put into the hands of every nervous parent for, think

as you may, all nervous parents beget nervous children. But does it follow that such children should have a nervous breakdown almost before they are out of their teens? No, decidedly not; and what is more, they never should and never would break down, if they had proper food.

I look back with horror on the many nights of my childhood when I suffered with "night terrors." And right here let me say: no child will *ever have night terrors* if he is given just what he should eat, and is kept from overeating. And now a few words about the *first* great point concerning the prevention as well as the cure of "nerves."

Nervous people, and many others as well, eat too much. That, you say, is nothing new. But that is just where the dreadful wrong begins; and why there has been tragedy after tragedy, and why even while this is being written there will be many more tragedies. You will hear

lecturers say—I myself have said it, and to large audiences: “You people eat too much.” But if that’s all that is said, people straightway go away and say: “Oh, yes, he’s right, of course. We all eat too much.” And there it ends. Until recently people did not know—most of them don’t know yet—that each day they are actually bringing the grave nearer by overeating.

Not long ago the great life insurance companies of this country held a notable convention in the city of New York. Now after everything had been said and done, after every phase of life insurance had been discussed, what do you suppose was the great outstanding statement from that remarkable body of men who know more about why people die than any other body of people on earth? It was this: “The average American *man or woman* dies at the age of 43 because he eats what he wants to eat rather than what he should

eat." That means, of course, that practically all Americans overeat. They are all like the child who says, "I'm not hungry for bread and butter. I'm hungry for cake." And I find that most of these poor deluded nervous sufferers eat what they want under the supposition that it is good for them because they crave it. I myself used to do so. I would eat candy by the pound. And it is odd but quite true that nervous people crave the very things that hurt them most. But there is no more sense in eating what you crave because you crave it than there is in the man who is addicted to alcohol, drinking alcohol because he craves it. I once used tobacco; I craved it, but I did not need it just because I craved it. It is true the body naturally needs some fats, some carbohydrates; in fact, a balanced ration, as we shall see later. But I want to make it mighty plain here that never was there a greater error than that of supposing you

need chocolates or sweets just because you crave them. And you don't need to overeat, and keep on doing it, just because you must eat.

II. HOW TO OVERCOME THE TROUBLE

“He who pursues a regular course of life need not be apprehensive of illness, as he who has guarded against the cause need not be afraid of the effect.”

—CORNARO

II. HOW TO OVERCOME THE TROUBLE

We have now come to the second step in the cure of "nerves"—eating the right food in the right way. You must chew all food until it is of the consistency of cream, and you must also sip all liquids slowly. And now, as you read these things that I have set down, I want you to remember this: doing any one thing—and doing that alone—will not cure this malady. No, it is doing a number of things at the right time. I know this is true because I have tried it. For a time I chewed my food to a cream, but that was the only thing I did in an endeavor to get well. I was doing none of the other things that are absolutely necessary for a cure. This is one great trouble with all such people. They will

Fletcherize for a time and then say there is nothing to that because it does not cure them. Well, as I've said, that alone will not, and I want to dwell at length on this because nobody knows as well as I do, what harm such a belief does the nervous sufferer.

Trying out Fletcherizing alone, which I say must be done together with other things if you want to get well and stay well, is like taking the handle of an axe and going out into the woods to cut down a tree. Now with Fletcherizing you have a perfectly good handle, but you know very well that you can't cut a tree down with only an axe handle. But that is not the fault of the handle. The fault is obviously your own. Now suppose you get the axe and fit the handle to it. You can then cut the tree down if you work hard enough at the task. Again, suppose you cut the tree half way through and quit. Will the axe keep on until the work is done?

You know it will not, and you very well know if you wish to be cured you must keep on doing your part of the work or dieting will be of no value whatever to you. Now suppose a man comes along and tells you that the axe you have is no good and therefore it is no use for you to keep on trying to use it. That is exactly what some physicians still say about Fletcherizing.

But you say, "I must cut this tree down. Nobody will do it for me; how shall I get it down? Can you give me an axe that will cut it down?"

"Oh, no," he replies, "but anyway there's no use fooling with that one."

Then, if you are determined to do the work, you say, "I have to cut the tree down. You have no other axe to offer me, so I'm going to try the one I have." And you go ahead and cut down the tree. Then just as you have finished, the man comes your way again, and in great delight

you call out to him: "Come and see! I cut this tree down with the axe you said was no good!"

The man comes over to you and says, "Where's the tree? I don't see it!"

You are astonished and you tell him, "There it lies on the ground right before your eyes! Can't you see it?"

But he turns and walks away saying: "There is no tree there; it is all in your mind."

This is exactly what people with "nerves" have been told again and again by physicians, by relatives, and by most other people who have never had "nerves."

I tell you these things so that when you begin to eat sparingly and chew your food to a cream you may fortify yourself against well-meaning but mistaken friends and relatives. And, oddly enough, it does seem that the individual with "nerves" has more friends and relatives than any other person in the world.

Remember you must not only chew your food to the consistency of cream for one or two months, you must make this practice a lifelong habit. If you cannot take time to eat a meal in this way, you had much better go hungry. To people who travel and must frequently take their meals in railroad eating houses, I would say, get some bread and butter sandwiches and eat them slowly while on the train. There is always a chance to secure all you need to eat, too. You may not always be able to sit an hour at the table—the time we should give to a meal if we eat as we should. I know many object to this rule on the ground that if we followed it we should get nothing else done. But that is nonsense. Did not the Master of us all say, “Are there not twelve hours in the day?” Then can we not devote three of the twelve to our food? If we have nine hours in which we are at our highest efficiency, is it not good sense, if we eat

three meals a day, to give three hours to these meals? There is only one sane answer to the question; we should take an hour for a meal.

Every now and then some magazine writer will state that the chewing of food to a cream does not help anybody. He will tell you that you can swallow your food any old way and it will not hurt you in the least. In fact, I actually saw an article in one of our leading periodicals containing just such statements. We should, I suppose, have only pity for an editor who would give space to such stuff, and should also pity the poor wretch who by writing it is striving to attain notoriety. At any rate there is one excellent thing about such lies, they do harm for only a little while. When people find out that a thing is harmful to them, they usually quit it, no matter how many notoriety seekers are urging and encouraging them to keep on.

Usually the sufferer with "nerves" is the only one in the household who will eat sparingly and chew his food slowly. But now and then I find an intelligent, sympathetic man who will do so because it is helpful to his wife. He sympathizes with her infirmity, and with fine self-denial eats as she does. And note this: he usually derives benefit from so doing. Time after time when I have put a nervous woman under this regimen, and then her husband elected to go along with her, I have had the man come to me and say: "Well, doctor, I declare I'm feeling a whole lot better myself! I don't get sleepy any more during the daytime, and that pain I used to have in the region of my liver is gone!" And so on and on.

The fact is just this: anybody who follows the rules that I learned to apply in my own case cannot fail to be benefited. And although those not inclined to "nerves" can eat a greater variety of food,

it's greatly to be desired when there is a nervous person in a household of grown-ups that all other members of the family enter together into this thing. It could not fail to help every one of them. To be truthful, in the beginning you will all find it mighty hard to persist in chewing all your food to a cream. Mouthful after mouthful of food will get away from you when you are not thinking. This just goes to show how we are in the habit of bolting our food. At first people who Fletcherize or chew their food perfectly, usually lose weight. I most certainly did. I lost about twenty pounds because of it, but I was so well and felt so good I could almost have jumped over the North Star.

I know that, unfortunately, a lot of people with "nerves" have started to chew their food carefully and to eat sparingly, but the minute they found themselves losing weight they were frightened and quit. They went on carrying that ten

or twenty or thirty pounds of flesh and all the time suffering the tortures of the damned just in order that they might keep it. But of what benefit are a certain number of extra pounds of flesh and how can a man explain such a senseless action?

The astonishing thing is that many physicians are willing to condemn a cure just as soon as they find the patient has lost a pound of beef. But as I said before, the primary mission of man in this world is not to raise beef. I do not find fault with the raising of beef in the feeding yards, but if beef must be raised let us confine the industry to the cattle pens and stock yards. Let us not worship it to the degree that we would rather live in hell than part with a few extra pounds that overload our own bodies.

Now just here I want it distinctly understood, as I have said before, that this text is primarily for *functional nervous cases*. Tubercular people belong to an

entirely different class. They should live out of doors day and night and should, if possible, be treated at outdoor institutions established for such cases. But the individual with "nerves" will find what he needs and will find it abundantly if he has enough determination to take hold of it and keep at it.

On the part of many it will take all the determination they have to chew their food to a cream and always eat sparingly. In regard to the amount of food taken, judgment must of course be used. We all know that it is possible to eat too little. But you should always quit eating while you still feel you would like a little more. I know of no better guide than this to offer you. But I have observed that the person who eats slowly and chews his food to a cream never eats as much food as he would if he bolted it. It is just like letting a thirsty horse drink water. I remember, as a boy on the farm, when I led a

very thirsty horse from the field to the water tank how rapidly he would swallow. If my father were with me, after the horse had drunk a while he would say, "Make him hold his head up." Frequently when I did so the horse would draw a long breath and drink no more. Had he gone right on drinking, as a thirsty horse will if you permit him to do so, he might have drunk twice as much as was good for him. And that's the way people eat. As a result the horse that drinks and drinks and drinks when he is very thirsty sometimes dies in a few hours. I have seen a horse die from drinking too much water and I have also seen people die in a few hours after a terrible gorge that they could not get rid of. Do you know that most nervous people have a way of sitting down to the table and eating until they are literally full? If you could take out the stomach of such a person and look at it, the sight would frighten you. And with good reason. For as a result of

this habit many nervous people have dilated stomachs. But if they would correct their manner of eating there is usually enough tone in the muscular walls of the stomach to get it back to normal. I marvel again and again over how miraculously nature restores herself even after she has been terribly abused, if only she is given a chance.

I am certain that all human beings would be more efficient if they chewed all solid food to a cream and sipped all liquids slowly. The late Professor William James, the great Harvard psychologist, testified to the value of such a habit, as did a number of other distinguished Harvard professors. I regret that some physicians still hold out in their belief that it does no good although the evidence stands out as clearly before them as a tree along the roadside. But they are like the physician who some years ago declared that bathing was bad for people. I recall how hard we all bore down

upon him, as he richly deserved, and how the Journal of the American Medical Association printed a short poem ridiculing him. I am quite certain that the members of the Regular school of medicine have progressed infinitely farther toward the cure of diseases than members of all the other schools combined. I do not say this simply because I happen to be a physician of the Regular school; I say it because a candid survey of what has been accomplished, and by whom, proves it. But as to diet, we have done little compared with what we should do. We have made no greater progress along this line because so many of us have been blinded by prejudice—the curse of the human race.

With regard to chewing all food to a cream, most modern writers on dietetics, while acknowledging that this super-mastication is useful, maintain that it does not increase the value of the food. But they err greatly in this, as we can prove in a

very few words: If a certain amount of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates is bolted by a nervous man suffering from a breakdown, it will cause intestinal toxemia as a result of the bolted food, but if he chews the food to a cream it will be digested in a normal manner and will not cause gas in the stomach or intestines. The proper amount of food is absorbed and nourishes the man as it should. Now did not the thorough mastication of that food increase the value of the proteins, fats, and carbohydrates? The thing is a self-evident fact. In the first case a man takes food which quickly turns to a loathsome poison. In the second instance the same kind of food is so thoroughly mixed with the ptyalin in the saliva that whatever is eaten becomes of value as protein or fat or some other food element.

After many years of sad experience with this malady we call "nerves" I am convinced that the reason why people have this

disease is because they are literally "food drunk." I have treated men who had been on an alcohol debauch and I know how terribly depressed they are after such a spree is over. It is exactly the same way with the pre-nervous people that break down. They sit down to a big meal and overeat. There is a temporary stimulus, just as in the case of the person who takes intoxicants, followed by that terrible mental depression that all who have suffered from "nerves" know. And because the individual with the "nerves" is overeating two or three times each day, he stays drunk with the poisons that form in his stomach and intestines. Such people over-assimilate the poisonous products of proteins, especially of sugars. Of course this may seem oddly stated because we would not want any absorption of the poisons in the intestines, but it is probable that nature can and does take care of a little of it there in the healthy individual.

It is perfectly absurd to say, as some physicians still continue to say, that no poisonous matter is ever absorbed in the intestinal tract. Give a child something that causes intestinal indigestion and see how quickly he has a rise in temperature. This fever is the direct result of poisons absorbed in the intestines. In the case of the nervous adult, however, this poison does not as often result in fever as it does in a horrible mental depression and a complete inability to perform any sort of work.

And so there seems no question but that this terrible malady we call "nerves," or a nervous breakdown in any of its many forms, is in a majority of cases the result of the wrong eating habits of the individual. The chewing of all food to a cream will go far toward curing the trouble, but in most cases this alone will not effect a cure. It would not have done so in my own case, although I did see much improvement as a result of that practice alone.

And here I want to say this: There are many who say they cannot eat acid fruits because of the distress they cause. Now if such people would always chew an apple, a pear, or other fruit to a cream, no distress would result from eating fresh fruit. But such people must follow in detail the diet I shall give farther on.

Now, facts cannot be stated too strongly. It is certain acid fruits will cause distress if you do not chew them to a cream. I would swell up like a toad if I ate only one apple hurriedly. I don't dare think what might happen to me if I ate three or four in that way. I might possibly find myself transformed into a human balloon and float away into space. But I don't eat apples that way—not now. Some who read these pages may think it very strange, yet it is quite true that there really are persons suffering with "nerves" who have not gumption enough to follow this simple rule of chewing all food to a cream. I despair

of ever helping those people. They still continue to dispose of a big meal in fifteen minutes, and then insist they have chewed all their food carefully. I have had that thing happen right before my own eyes. Then think of their complaining that they cannot eat apples because they cause so much gas in the stomach!

One reason why a large number of such people are troubled with gas, even though they do chew their food to a cream, is because they immediately follow a meal with one or two cups of tea or coffee. Now please remember this: An individual afflicted with "nerves" has no business drinking either tea or coffee. He should let them both alone. Plain hot water is the very best drink in the world for a nervous person. If you want a drink after your meal drink a cup of plain hot water. And you should also drink a cup of hot water half an hour before breakfast. If you do not care for breakfast, and feel you do

not need this meal, drink the hot water anyway. The victim of "nerves" should never drink during the meal but after it, if he must drink anything at all. He should also drink a pint or more of cold water between meals every day.

Now, another thing with regard to chewing all solid food to a cream. It has been proved over and over again in my own case and in that of many others, that in doing this the brain and muscles are both made stronger and keener for work, that those who chew their food in this way have much greater endurance, both mental and physical, than those who do not.

Today if I should relax my vigilance in respect to chewing my food I should soon go down again. But with this aid, which I now so easily employ, combined with exactly the right things to eat, I find I need have no fear. It has been ten years since my last breakdown and in that interval I have done the very best work and by

far the hardest brain work of a lifetime. I do not believe people break down from overwork. You may think that a perfectly absurd statement. But I have good grounds upon which to base my belief. If nervous people would eat sparingly and chew their food to a cream, eating the foods I shall mention later on, I am confident they would rarely, if ever, break down.

It is certain that in the last ten years, with the greatest mental strain on me, I should have gone down again, and perhaps more than once, if I had not found what caused "nerves" and how to prevent it. In the meantime I have written ten or more books, and every writer, at least, knows what a nerve-racking profession writing is. In addition to all this mental labor I have gone right ahead with my medical practice. Surely there is balm in this particular Gilead.

But if you will not chew your food to a cream you need not expect to win the

entire reward. And you must do this not only one day or one week or one month or one year, but all the days, weeks, months, and years that you may live. And, alas! I know only too well all the trouble well-meaning but deluded people who sit at the table with a nervous individual will make him when they discover how much time he is taking to chew his food. At first, because of the length of time I spent at a meal, such people thought I must be eating as much as a horse. But, here and there, for I was in many places, when people found out what I was doing, they would only courteously deride me for being so gullible about what they termed fads.

We are all well aware that the vast majority of Americans do not chew their food to a cream or anything like it. And there are those, therefore, who advance as an argument that because the majority do not there must be something wrong with the minority who do. Well, let us follow

this out a little: Not so many hundred years ago everybody believed the world was *flat*. But their theory did not make it flat. And so, even though thousands of people who crowd our eating houses do bolt their food, that does not prove there is no danger in the practice. And they who do it are digging their graves with their teeth.

Chew your food!

III. RIGHT AND WRONG DIET FOR NERVOUS PEOPLE

“He who leads a sober and regular life,
and commits no excess in his diet, can
suffer but little from disorders of any
kind.”

—CORNARO

III. RIGHT AND WRONG DIET FOR NERVOUS PEOPLE

People who are the offspring of nervous parents and who have had a nervous breakdown should not eat commercial sugar, eggs, or animal food of any kind whatever. These statements may seem wholly unimportant to some people, but I realize what a tremendous bomb I throw into the camps of others when they read them. You see, for centuries people have believed meat and eggs to be the best of all foods; so when I make a statement like the foregoing, the effect is not unlike that which followed Columbus' statement that no matter what people believed, the fact was that the earth was round, not flat. From the very beginning it has not made a single bit of difference as to what physicians or

anybody else thought; facts count. And no matter what we may think or how long we have thought it, facts go right on being facts just the same.

Sometimes, even after twenty years' experience, about once in two or three months—because there is nothing else at hand—I find myself eating a small bit of meat. This usually happens when I am on a lecture tour. But if I eat only a small slice of bacon at the evening meal I dream bad dreams and the next morning feel drowsy, heavy, and sluggish. Animal foods as well as eggs and commercial sugar poison all those born of nervous parents. I have proved the truth of this by my own case and by several years' observation of other cases.

Do your children have "night terrors"? You answer, yes. Well, let me tell you how to stop these horrors in the little ones. If you give them meat—and remember you should never give them pork—let

them have a very small piece at noon, never at night. And they should never be permitted to have it for breakfast. Give the child his one small bit of meat at noon. For the evening meal give him some cereal with milk or cream, but no sugar. Give him all he wants of this special dish, but nothing else at that meal, and you will find his "night terrors" and moaning will cease.

I look back on most of the nights of my childhood with horror, for until I became a man I talked in my sleep and had the most horrible dreams. I used also to get up in my sleep and walk about the room. My parents were well aware of the fact that all of their eight children were poor sleepers, and of them all I was by far the worst. And, although it was innocently done, the food they were giving us was poisoning us. You don't need to think that in order to take poison you must have strychnine or arsenic. No, indeed you don't. We

were fed exactly as hundreds and thousands of poor little ones are being fed now as this is being written. We were fed on meat, eggs, and fats, and when we became ill, friends round about us thought they were doing something real kind when they sent in a nice piece of fried rabbit or some celebrated golden brown fried chicken. But we vomited at the sight of the food—which was really our salvation.

I have two boys of my own. The elder, a sturdy chap not yet ten years of age, has to have clothes for a fourteen-year-old boy, and he is much stronger than any boy of his age he has ever met. The younger boy is now seven and his physical development is wonderful for a child of that age. Now these boys hardly know what an egg is. They never eat one. As to meat, I am certain that since they were born they have not eaten it on an average of once a week. They have eaten a little, but you will admit that eating meat not

more than once a week, and often going weeks without a bit of it, certainly is eating very little. There have been times when they have not seen meat for three months.

Now, I don't eat as I do and have my children eat as they do just for a fad. I think nothing is more stupid and silly than for people to do certain things just because somebody else does them. We should all have good sound reasons for our actions in this world. We should all try our very best to use sound common sense. That's why I say that people who are the offspring of nervous parents should not eat animal food of any kind after they are twenty-one, and they should never at any time eat eggs. It would be far better for them if they did not eat commercial sugar. But I do admit that when some of these people get well by dieting, they are able to eat sparingly of all these things and still keep well. But some people can never eat them and I am one of the number.

I remember one summer about two years ago I was on a lecture tour for a Chautauqua Bureau, and it seemed that surely I got into the very worst eating places that summer that I ever had in my life. For three or four days I ate only eggs, as they seemed to be about the only food I could get besides bread and butter. At the end of the third day—I remember the time very well—when night came I could not sleep, and just as when I had one of my nervous breakdowns, that old feeling of inexpressible gloom began to settle over me. I knew instantly the cause of it, because twice before when I had purposely experimented with eating eggs I had had similar experiences. I immediately took a heavy cathartic and after having thoroughly rid myself of the poison I again slept well.

But I am not alone in this fight against the use of eggs for nervous people. John Burroughs said that eggs poisoned him. and

I have talked with men of great wealth and great business ability who have reached the top by their own efforts, who have told me that eggs poisoned them.

Now I have found that for these nervous people animal food is a slow poison. Sooner or later it will do its work.

And just here I wish to say that there are some people who seemingly can eat almost anything and not suffer from so doing. Last summer I talked with Count Ilya Tolstoy, son of Leo Tolstoy, the celebrated Russian writer. The Count, who is also a lecturer, told me that he was obliged to have eggs and that he had eaten them all his life. He said his appetite was never satisfied unless he ate eggs. He is now past sixty, and apparently is strong and rugged. Now eggs no doubt are good for him. But right here is where infinite harm can be done to nervous people like myself. People who can eat everything—and among physicians seemingly there

are many who can do so — will say to these poor sufferers:

“Why, it’s all nonsense about things hurting you! Eat anything you want and all you want and then forget about it.”

Physicians have said that to me and during the past twenty years I have heard them say it thousands of times to others.

Personally I do not believe in Christian Science — physicians of the Regular school do not believe in it; but do you know that when a physician says to a sufferer from “nerves,” “It’s all nonsense about what you eat hurting you; eat anything you want and then forget about it,” that physician is fully endorsing Christian Science. He is telling the person to whom he is talking that there is no such thing as physical suffering. Of course, such a physician is nothing but a fool. Yet that’s why so many of these people turn to Christian Science. Yes, that is exactly why they try it. It bolsters up a sufferer

for a time just as contact with a magnetic and hopeful personality may for a time bolster one up. But such persons almost always go back to the sanitariums. "Nerves" is not a mental disease; that is, the seat of the trouble is not mental but physical, and the mental phase of "nerves" is only a symptom, or rather one of the symptoms of the disease.

We people who have gone down into the dark valley have experienced a million, more or less, different kinds of feelings. I fully believe one half of the American people are the offspring of nervous parents. This means that there are fifty-five million of this nervous type of Americans. This type includes people all the way from the man in an office who gets angry quickly, to the individual who is in a state of complete collapse. And the man who is afflicted with nothing more than a quick temper, or is living under high nervous tension, is liable to beget children who

will suffer from the malady in a far worse degree than ever he will, unless, indeed, he eats only the things he should eat and observes a number of other rules besides the two I have already laid down.

Now, the ideal diet for nervous people is a slightly modified vegetarian diet. To be specific, it is a Lacto-vegetarian diet minus eggs. There are, however, two things included in this diet that I would warn one in the beginning to eat of sparingly. These are bananas and cooked cabbage. If they agree with you, well and good; but if they do not, let them strictly alone.

Eat all kinds of vegetables, both fresh and cooked. Eat all kinds of fruits, especially fresh fruits. There is an old saying and a good one, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

There are a thousand ways to prepare vegetables and fruits for the table, and there are a number of books that give

good recipes. If a nervous individual has never yet had a breakdown I believe he can safely eat most of the vegetarian dishes that have eggs in them, but it would be a serious mistake to select the special dishes that contain eggs and live on those just because they contain eggs.

I believe, too, that after a nervous person is restored to health, if he strictly observes the rules of eating sparingly and of chewing all food to a cream, he may safely try out such courses as are found in *Bardsley's Recipes for Food Reformers* or *Broadbent's Forty Vegetarian Dinners*.

It may seem odd, but there are people who for some reason or other lack the instinct, or whatever is needed, to know that a certain thing they eat hurts them. I have had men and women sit in my office and say with the utmost sincerity that they were certain that it wasn't anything they ate that hurt them because they never had any pain in the abdomen.

Sometimes these people were in a dreadful state of nervous breakdown. So you see the danger that lies here. If you know, you can always tell what special thing disagrees with you. For example, I know eggs disagree with me, and like John Burroughs and many others, I know when they harm me. Therefore, after you have recovered you might try being your own physician. But if you are not sure as to what disagrees with you, you would much better stick to a vegetarian diet and go without eggs the remainder of your days.

Commercial sugar also is the cause of many breakdowns among the people of this country. And is it not strange how these poor suffering people crave sweets — the very thing they should not have. They will argue with themselves—and some physicians will agree with them — that they should go right on eating candy because they want it. But, as I have already said, there is just as much sense in

saying a man should have whiskey because he craves it or that a young man should have tobacco because he craves it, as to say that any one should have candy because he craves it. There is absolutely no sense in such an argument. If you are suffering from a nervous breakdown, for sixty days quit eating candy and everything sweet except honey, and follow the other rules I have already laid down. It may be that you will have to stick to this diet for three months. But try it. That is exactly what cured all my bodily ills and brought my soul out of the dark and gloomy night after everything else had failed. I do not mean to say that this diet alone cured me, but I do say it was the biggest factor in the cure. There are, however, some other things that it would be worse than folly to ignore. This I shall come to later. But just here I want to have it understood that this thing of eating—how you eat, and how much you

eat, and what you eat—is of transcendent importance in the cure.

Of course, under some circumstances connected with cases of breakdown, nothing but the good judgment of friends will avail. For example, the question of how much one shall eat is something that not all the books in the world nor all the physicians in the world can determine. I say, always quit while you want a little more. I cannot say more or less than that.

So many have written me recently asking just what I eat, that it may be a help to some of them if I set down here just what I ate today. I ate no breakfast at all. Sometimes I go for weeks without eating breakfast. This is especially apt to be the case if I am engaged in writing a magazine article or a book. I find my brain is much clearer and that I can work much better when I eat no breakfast. But I do drink one or two cups of very weak tea. I use just enough tea to color the

water. Now I do not advise everybody to go without breakfast. Some people tell me that they have a headache unless they eat something. And some writers say that if they do not eat a little breakfast they cannot write so well. Thus you see where the question of common sense and using your own judgment comes in. There are always a few things you will have to decide for yourselves. At noon I ate about two handfuls of corn flakes with milk and cream but no sugar, finishing with about four ounces of bread pudding that had a little brown sugar in it. Now, in mid-afternoon, as I write this, I am not hungry. Tonight I shall eat another dish of corn flakes and some buttered toast and three or perhaps four good-sized apples, I usually eat three or four apples a day. If I want a piece of pie for lunch, I eat it, but I eat nothing else.

I live on the plainest of plain foods. Apples used to create a lot of gas in my

stomach, but now they do not because I chew them to a cream. Milk used to make me constipated, but it does not when I chew the cereal with it carefully and eat a number of apples.

Most nervous people are constipated. But apples are really the salvation of nervous people. If you are constipated, drink, or rather, sip, a glass of hot water half an hour before breakfast, then eat nothing for breakfast but apples; eat two big ones and chew them slowly to a cream. Go to stool regularly every morning. This habit is half the cure of constipation.

Apples, of all things I know, are the finest things for the liver. If you take a patient ill from chronic indigestion, whose stools are clay colored, and put him on a diet of apples, if he chews properly, in less than twenty-four hours the stools will be of the regulation dark brown color, as they should be when the liver is working in a normal, healthful manner. And eating

apples will work in exactly the same way with children as with adults.

Apples, apples, apples! Eat them no matter what the price. You remember how good Adam found the apple—or at least we presume it was an apple that he found so good—and I can think of no other single thing that would tempt a man to make all the trouble he did. If he had to sin, then I'm for Adam every time, for I think had I been in his place and Eve had offered me a big juicy red apple, I should have taken it and eaten it. I don't know but that I might even have eaten it without the invitation. I think that Adam's great mistake was not so much in eating the apple as in trying to lay the blame on the woman. Nobody should ever apologize for having eaten an apple.

Now, generally speaking, there is one thing a nervous parent—or any other kind of parent for that matter—should never say to a child. Never tell him he

is nervous. If we realize that our children are the offspring of nervous parents, it is, as I have already suggested, much better for all concerned, for we cannot avoid a danger unless we know what or where the danger is. When we know the child is nervous we should plan carefully, leaving out of his diet all pastries and rich greasy foods, and keep him largely on a vegetarian diet. But, as I have already suggested, we do not need to diet a nervous child as strictly as we do a nervous adult where infinite harm has already been done. Give the nervous child meat only a part of the time, and if he goes without eggs it will be all the better for him. I wish from the bottom of my heart that I had never tasted an egg!

What a fine thing it would be if we so trained our children that they would never suffer from "nerves"! And usually it could be done. The belief that because nervous parents have broken down their

children sooner or later must break down, is our greatest curse. But such a belief is absurd, for if dieting, outdoor exercise, and a few other simple rules are observed, there is no danger that it will happen. To be sure, these rules must be definitely understood and strictly adhered to.

If we treat this misfortune in the manner I shall mention later, we can make our lives more successful and infinitely happier than the lives of those who have never learned self-control. For instance, I am far healthier than men all around me who seem to be able to eat three Christmas dinners each day. They sit at the table and boast about being "good feeders," then later they come to me for pills, saying, "There is nothing the matter with me, doctor, but I thought I had better take a little medicine so I won't get ill." But they don't fool me. I know exactly what is the matter with them. They are so full of pork they can't think. To tell the

truth, we people who have suffered from a nervous breakdown or some illness akin to it, and have learned that we must eat right or die, are of all people the most fortunate.

Every now and then I hear some good old sister, with a face like a full moon and jowls like a bloodhound, say, as she finishes her third piece of mince pie, — her waist line having extended accordingly, — “Isn’t it too bad about poor brother Jones! He looks so terribly thin! They say he has fallen away from one hundred and sixty pounds to only a hundred and fifty. And they do say he can’t eat meat and eggs at all! The poor man!”

But the real facts of the case are that brother Jones is able to walk ten miles any day, and the possibility is that in the not distant future he will read in his morning paper that sister Sue Portly has been operated on for gall stones and the number reported is almost unbelievable, about

three hundred, in fact. And so, all the time sister Portly was feeling sorry for lithe, energetic brother Jones, she was a walking stone quarry, as it were, and yet didn't know it.

So don't worry because you have to diet or because after reading these lines you determine that you must begin to diet. For, whoever you are, and wherever you may be, you belong to a most fortunate class of people.

And now I wish to say some things about what nervous people should do besides dieting, and especially do I wish to say these things to those now suffering from a nervous breakdown. Much of it at least will apply to children of nervous parentage. You will observe as you go along that I keep mentioning "these children." I do so always with the thought in mind that there is absolutely no need for them ever to break down if these common sense rules are followed. I take it that not any one

of us or a number of us, but that all of us love our children more than we love ourselves. Admitting the truth of this, then we should all be interested in this system for them as well as for ourselves, for as their nerves are so shall their success be.

IV. VALUE OF OUTDOOR LIFE AND EXERCISE

“Better to hunt in fields for health
unbought.

The wise for cure on exercise depend;
God never made his work for man to
mend.”

—DRYDEN

IV. VALUE OF OUTDOOR LIFE AND EXERCISE

People in this country are now beginning to get away from the idea that a man or woman who is past sixty is getting "old." When the Rev. John Wesley, the itinerant preacher and author, was eighty-eight years old—please note the eighty-eight—he walked six miles to keep a preaching appointment. When asked if the walk tired him, he laughed and said: "Why, no! Not at all! The only difference I can see in my endurance now and when I was twenty is that I cannot run quite so fast."

I know there are calamity-howlers who say: "Oh, well, some people are born to success and long life and some are not!" The individual who permits himself to get into that frame of mind is doomed and

no one can help him. Such reasoning is of course all nonsense. John Wesley was always a spare eater. Yet he lived an active outdoor life, often traveling forty and even sixty miles a day on horseback. He never failed to keep an appointment on account of the weather. And he was a tireless worker, often preaching four and five times a day. At the same time he read and wrote every spare moment, turning out a large amount of literary work.

Dr. Eliot, ex-President of Harvard College, a constant writer and speaker, and among the greatest of American educators—now nearer 90 than 80 years of age—is also a moderate eater. He says, “I have always eaten moderately of simple food in great variety. This practice is probably the result, first, of a natural tendency, and then of confirmed habit and much experience under varying conditions of work and play. From much observation of eating habits of other people, both the young and

the mature, I am convinced that moderation, simplicity, and variety in eating are more important than any other bodily habit towards maintaining good health, power of work, and, barring accidents, attaining to enjoyable old age."

It is interesting to note what that eminent lawyer, legislator, and orator, Chauncey M. Depew, had to say on the occasion of his eighty-seventh birthday about a simple diet and reaching the century mark. "The true philosophy of life is this: The more you like a thing the more reason there is for giving it up if you find it is not good for you. If you treat nature properly, nature will adjust herself to you.

"My diet is very simple. I have the same breakfast every day in the year, and it consists of an orange, one four-minute egg, one half of a corn muffin, and a cup of coffee which is mainly hot milk. I have this at half past eight. My hour of rising is seven every morning.

‘For luncheon I partake principally of vegetables, with no meat, and a glass of water. This is at one o’clock. At dinner I skip most of the courses and enjoy small portions of vegetables, fish, and fowl. I never eat between meals and consume now less than half I did at fifty.

The vigor and long life of Bishop Fallows of Chicago are mainly due to his living and mental habits and to his simple diet. He is well over 85 years of age, but few men of three-score years can do as much work, the year round. There are two or three sermons and several public addresses each week, and the work of a large parish — from marriages and christenings to funerals and parish visitings — which is never slighted. An active Grand Army man and Civil War veteran, he is asked to address countless military and patriotic gatherings, and his energy seems as tireless as his spirit is willing. His ability to meet these demands can be traced back to simple living and simple eating.

The Bishop is temperate in all things, and refuses to worry. He neither drinks nor smokes.

In regard to his diet he says, "I eat very little meat, but take plenty of fruit, cereals and vegetables. I take regularly before breakfast a cup of hot grape juice. I use it frequently at other times. I take buttermilk daily." Night and morning he takes simple physical exercises, and always walks at least a couple of miles each day.

The Bishop's ancestors were long-lived. His great grandfather lived to be 96; his grandfather, 91; his eldest brother, 93. His father's death from a fall occurred at the age of 81. He has a brother who is 92. This in itself is evidence that he comes of a family in which right living—which means simple living—has prevailed until its effects have shown in each succeeding generation.

The world-renowned American inventor, Thomas A. Edison, now in his 75th year, has to-day a mind as brilliant and ingenious,

and a skill as remarkable for inventing things that are of practical use, as when at 21 he invented his automatic repeater which did so much for telegraphy. And Edison is another spare eater. What he ate at the three meals of the day on which he wrote the following letter, is characteristic of the small amount he eats every day in the year.

And you will learn that this is true of every man or woman who has lived long and is still doing active brain work. And so, once for all, let us think right about this matter. We get out of ourselves just about what we put into ourselves or do for ourselves in the way of food and exercise.

Most people do not take enough systematic outdoor exercise. And exercise, I would have you understand, is another essential in the cure of one who has "nerves." But I am quite sure that a lot of bad advice has been given women sufferers along this line. I find that as a rule, women make better progress, at

*From the Laboratory
Thomas A. Edison,
Orange, N.J.*

March 2, 1921.

Dr. Thomas Clark Hinkle
Cawker City, Kansas.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of February 25th was received. My food for the one day on which your letter was received, was as follows:

BREAKFAST

Cup coffee 1/2 milk, 1/2
coffee.
Two pieces toast, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4".
1/4" thick.
Another piece toast with
two small sardines on it.

MIDDAY MEAL

Glass milk.
Two pieces of dry toast.

EVENING MEAL

Two glasses milk.
Three pieces very thin dry
toast.
Small piece steak, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide,
3/8" thick, 3" long.
Small baked potato.
One piece nut chocolate.

Yours very truly,

Thomas A. Edison

*Weight 185 lbs
Can diminish this
diet without loss of weight
E*

least at first, with complete rest or as much rest as they can possibly get. I have seen great harm come from telling a woman afflicted with "The Mysterious Disease"—as it is often called—to take long walks. I am always extremely careful about telling such a woman to indulge in vigorous exercise. Some women, of course, are much stronger than others. My advice to a woman is to walk in the open air unless she is so ill she cannot walk at all without becoming very weak. And here again each person must use common sense and decide the matter herself. But no person with a nervous breakdown should ever work at any task or take any kind of exercise to the point of exhaustion.

I well remember a man who came to me some years ago suffering from this malady. He had been trying to get well by doing heavy stunts in a gymnasium. He was very muscular, in fact he was an athlete,

and was still under twenty-five years of age. His cheeks were ruddy, and to the ordinary observer he appeared to be in the pink of condition. But he had that peculiar expression of the eyes that flashed his story to me as plainly as if blazoned forth by the letters of an electric sign. I told him at once that he could never hope to cure his nerves by such violent exercises.

And right here let me advise men in this condition not to run. I receive many letters of inquiry from young men with broken-down nerves who tell me they are taking long walks and finishing with a run. To all such I say: Do not run. I know all about it for I have tried it. I was on my university football team. And all my life I have been fond of athletics. I am still fond of this kind of life and always expect to be, but exercise is frequently overdone by nervous people. Usually, the physically strong man who

breaks down with "nerves" thinks at once of physical training. But strange as it may seem, you can make such a man's muscles as hard as iron but that alone will not cure him. And it is true that many people in this condition do not seem nervous for they are not at all shaky, as some think an individual should be if he is the victim of a nervous breakdown.

I well remember that one day when at my worst I could not work nor concentrate my mind on anything. I chanced to be in Topeka, Kansas, and passed a shooting gallery. I was a good rifle shot and I had been taking long walks and shooting Kansas jack rabbits. I went in, picked up one of the rifles, and started firing at the biggest target. I rang the bell twice on that target in succession, and then aimed at the finest target there and rang the bell twice in succession on that. The proprietor was very much surprised, saying it was remarkably good shooting; and

yet I was down and out with "nerves." I have seen many athletes who, to the untrained observer, looked well, but who in reality were nervous wrecks. Outdoor exercise alone will not cure such people, or if seemingly it does—and this is important—sooner or later the individual is sure to go down again. You have first to remove the cause, and that is largely wrong diet. Now of course it is only reasonable to say that if such an individual does not get out of doors at all he cannot get well.

That is one trouble with many of our women today. They will go on a diet and stick to it, but they will not get out of doors. If they do go out, they ride a little distance in a street car or in an automobile to do some shopping. Or they go to a store and spend a good deal of time there—indoors, mind you—and then are whirled home again. Some of them seem to think that is taking outdoor exercise, but of

course it is not. So many times they have said to me, "Why, I do get out!" Yes, they do get out, but they immediately go indoors again.

The nervous individual, unless the collapse is so severe that the first few weeks must be spent in bed, should get out of doors at least three or four hours a day, every day in the week. This is a general rule that should be observed by everyone. It takes genuine courage, I know, for a man or woman to spend this much time out of doors. And I know that those who are compelled to work for a living cannot take three hours all at one time. But labor conditions in this country are such that I am sure the vast majority of our people could spend this much time outdoors in wholesome recreation if they would make up their mind to do so.

And remember this: After the nervous person is cured he should never let anything prevent him from continuing such

outdoor exercise. I am constantly trying to make this point—when you get well you should stay well. One breakdown is bad enough; don't have another. And you will not have another if you will change the habits of a lifetime as you are advised to do.

Among farmers there are many, the offspring of nervous parents with bad eating habits, who suffer from nervous breakdowns. So you see exercise out of doors alone will not cure such cases. Sometimes a farmer will tell me he fears to give up eating meat because he will grow weak as a result. But just here I wish to call your attention to the fact that there are nations that have for ages lived on this lacto-vegetarian diet. I myself have not eaten meat or eggs for ten years. At least I have not eaten them except the few times mentioned. And every time I did break the rule I was harmed far more than I was benefited. I am very

sure the farmer who chooses this lacto-vegetarian diet will thrive on it.

Members of our profession discovered not very long ago that at an advanced age the peasants of Bulgaria are a wonderfully preserved people both mentally and physically. Foolishly a great number of the profession immediately jumped to the conclusion that buttermilk alone did the miracle for these people. The drinking of buttermilk became such a fad that some of the largest of our physicians' supply houses began and are still making "buttermilk tablets." And physicians, many of them, are credulous enough to prescribe them. They might just as well prescribe chalk. While buttermilk tablets are harmless, they are of no benefit whatever. How easily fooled people — physicians included — may be! Bulgarian peasants are strong and rugged and live to a great age not because they drink buttermilk, but because they live on milk

and fruits and vegetables and stay out of doors. Buttermilk is a good healthful drink, but it is only a minor reason for the health and strength of the Bulgarian peasant. Now, really, could you think of anything more absurd than to prescribe buttermilk or buttermilk tablets as the fountain of youth when the patient is breaking all the laws of health, as most buttermilk laymen and physicians are doing? It seems almost impossible that people—physicians in particular—should for a moment believe such things. But they do. Barnum said there was a “sucker” born every minute, and this certainly seems to be true.

No, there is no royal road to health. The buttermilk-tablet route will not take you there. If you will live out of doors as Bulgarian peasants do, and if you will eat as they do,—as man is expected to eat,—you will live just as long as they do, and you will get a great deal more out of

life and be much more helpful to others. When the "time" comes round for your next buttermilk tablet, do not take it. Instead, do as those peasants do—leave off eating meat and take a two-hour walk in the sunshine. Then when nine o'clock comes, like the Bulgarian, go to bed and stay there until morning.

If the person afflicted with "nerves" expects to get well and stay well, he must go to bed at an early hour and get eight or nine hours of sleep not only some nights but every night in the week. When one begins dieting and taking outdoor exercise he should go to bed regularly at an early hour even though he has not been sleeping well. No matter how many sleepless nights he has experienced before beginning this regime, he should retire early just the same, because, sooner or later, sleep will come and the relaxed body is resting even if the individual does not sleep. Now I have been through all this

lying awake at night, so I know from experience that it is best to go to bed early and at a regular hour. If you can, you should sleep nine hours. Nervous people need more sleep than others. Sleep is a better restorer of nerves than anything else we can try. I do not believe that ten or even eleven hours' sleep would be harmful to a nervous adult, because very often I have seen such a person benefited by it.

Children should have all the sleep they want up to ten or twelve hours. But after a child has wakened in the morning he should be permitted to get up. It is not good for him to lie in bed after he wishes to rise, for nature is calling him to get up and exercise.

The nervous individual not only should exercise systematically out of doors but he should play some game. You remember when we were children how much we loved to play? Well, to give up play when

we grow up is all nonsense. And just because people quit playing is the reason they have wrinkles and frowns. Did you ever notice how often people laugh when at play? There is something about play that compels one to laugh. And what all people need, nervous people and others as well, is to get into the habit of laughing more.

And it is not hard to find something to play. I like to play at basket ball with a child, and I can enjoy tossing a ball for an hour if the child will stick to the game that long. Playing basket ball in the open air on a sunshiny day is one of the very finest exercises in the world.

If you are suffering from "nerves" and are able to be out of doors at all,—I mean if you are well enough to be out, and at least nine out of ten sufferers are,—get a basket ball and get some one to play with you. If at first you are poor at catching the ball you will with practice improve.

Gradually toss the ball a little higher and a little higher until you have difficulty in catching it. Any woman or girl can stand this sort of open air exercise. If the weather is cold, no matter; wrap up and play anyway. But enter into the game with spirit. Playing the regular game of basket ball is too violent exercise for the nervous person. The victim of "nerves" should always keep in mind that it is mild outdoor exercise that will do him good.

Tennis is too violent an exercise for people who have had nervous trouble. Anyway, there is no use in one's doing anything that will make his heart beat like a trip-hammer. A women can toss a basket ball and laugh and get rosy cheeks and grow younger and prettier as easily as when playing tennis.

Golf is also good exercise, but a large number of people who work for a living and suffer from "nerves" would have little chance for exercise if golf were all

that could be offered them. Furthermore golf is practically only a summer game, and an individual belonging to the pre-nervous class needs outdoor exercise every day in the year. But golf is excellent exercise, and there is nothing better if one has the time to give to it and has access to links.

Bicycling is splendid exercise for nervous people, but automobiles are so numerous that it is now considered almost dangerous to ride a wheel on any of our main traveled roads.

Mountain climbing, I believe, is not to be recommended for most people suffering from "nerves." I have known such people to go to Colorado and spend some time climbing mountains, and then come back much worse than when they went away. My advice to the nervous person who goes to the mountains is to be out of doors all the time he can, but to take things easy. It would be better for such

a person to walk about slowly on the level ground through some of the towns or along the foothills.

Let leisure be your watchword in a hill country. I know I injured my nerves out in Colorado one summer because I was ill advised. Mountain air is good for you, but the mountains will do you more good if you simply look at them. If you think you must go to the top, take a burro. You will find that the burro will give you a lesson in how to do things in a leisurely way. Do not get out of patience with him and whip him. Remember that the burro is smarter than you are in regard to the business of mountain climbing. He has never had a nervous breakdown, and if you will let him have his own way he never will have. It will do you good to let him have his way; he affords a tremendous lesson in patience. Patience, that's just what we need, and we need it badly.

Walking slowly in the open air for two or three hours is the best exercise for man. Fortunately, like the water we drink, it is free to the poor as well as the rich.

For the nervous man who is able to do it, I know of nothing better to build up muscles and keep the liver and other internal organs in good shape than sawing wood. Don't scorn this sort of exercise because you have been told that the ex-Kaiser is taking it. That is not to be laid up against the wood or the exercise, for, quite fortunately, the wood does not care who saws it.

Get some wood, then, and a buck saw, and saw wood for your own benefit. You can do this morning and evening. Wood sawing brings into play every muscle in the body, and the exercise is just enough to make a man comfortably tired without doing him harm.

Many people who go to sanitariums for a cure pay from fifty to seventy-five dol-

lars per week for the privilege of sawing wood, and you can take this exercise just as well and at considerably less expense at home, sawing your own wood instead of that of the sanitarium.

Another splendid diversion for a man with "nerves," if he can have it, is a small workshop where he can make just any old thing out of boards and nails. If one is apt in this line, he can make things that will interest children. This sort of work requires a certain kind of concentration that is most excellent for the nervous sufferer. This suggestion would of course apply to a woman, too, if she cared to try such an experiment. Sewing, and especially fine needlework, is very trying to a woman's nerves, and if she has broken down under that kind of work she should quit it and do something else. If she has to make her living in that way, she of all people should observe the outdoor rules as well as rules for dieting.

I am sure nervous people profit by frequenting all possible outdoor games. If a number of people afflicted with "nerves" could get together and take daily walks and at the same time determine that their conversation should always have a humorous slant, it would help all of them wonderfully.

Riding in an automobile is beneficial if the machine is driven slowly and the patient is kept out of doors from three to four hours. But the fast driving that is generally done is bad for these people. They come back from a ride worse than when they started.

It may be set down as a general rule that any form of outdoor exercise or play is good for the nervous person if it is not violent.

Nervous people should, if possible, take a vacation once a year and get into new surroundings. I am certain, however, that it does not make any difference where one

lives. A man is just as likely to have a breakdown in one part of the world as another. While on these vacations he should stick to his rules just as rigidly as when he is at home.

I have had letters from people in Canada and from others in Florida who have suffered nervous breakdowns. In California some go to pieces. I have had many letters from people living there who have broken down. People also break down in Colorado and in New York; in fact, in every state in the Union. Climate does not seem to make any difference so far as this trouble is concerned, with the exception that in high altitudes I have observed nervous people are inclined to be more restless than elsewhere. Some years ago I went up Pike's Peak, to the Summit House. I went to bed and spent the night there, but I do not say I slept, for in reality I slept only about half an hour. I was not at all sick at the stomach, as so many

are who climb up there; I had prevented this by eating a very light breakfast and chewing my food to a cream. But I was extremely nervous. I have found a great many other nervous people who do not feel quite right when in a high altitude. As a general rule, sea level is as good a place as a nervous individual can find to live. But people break down there, too. The diet, you see, is the big thing. And when I say "diet" I mean the way food is eaten and the amount eaten quite as much as I do the kind of food eaten.

And once more let me say, systematic outdoor exercise also counts, and you can't keep fit if you exercise only one, two, or three days a week. Some people who take long walks in the country on Sunday think that will suffice. But it will not. You must have exercise every day and must have some play along with it. Gymnasium work is of very little value as compared to outdoor exercise.

In the summertime, gardening is a splendid form of exercise. And so is the care of a small flock of chickens, which is possible for those living in the smaller towns. It is always better, when taking outdoor exercise, to have something definite to do. When walking it is a good plan, if you can, to have some definite place to go. And if you have an agreeable companion to keep up a rapid-fire talk, that will help also. All these things are mentally stimulating.

Then, if possible, sleep the year round on a sleeping porch. If you don't possess a porch, then, have all the windows in your sleeping room wide open day and night.

If for a time you have to take physic, it is best to take some hot mineral water half an hour before breakfast. But adhering to dieting and exercise, and eating enough apples, usually overcomes constipation.

Now, there are some things about which a person must use his own good judgment. For instance, if you have any bad teeth you should at once go to a good dentist and have them attended to. Nobody with bad teeth can have good health.

Again, if your tonsils have become mere pus sacs you will have to go to a good nose and throat specialist and have them removed before you can expect to have good health. This, however, applies to all people, whether nervous or not.

The same thing is true with regard to your eyes. If you are suffering from eye strain because you need glasses, you cannot hope to get well of "nerves" until your eyes are properly fitted to glasses by some reliable eye specialist. These are things that each individual must discover and do for himself. He should consult a dentist, an oculist, an aurist, or other specialist according to his particular need.

V. EFFECT OF RIGHT LIVING ON
WORRY AND UNHAPPINESS

“Neither melancholy nor any other affection of the mind can hurt bodies governed with temperance and regularity.”

—CORNARO

V. EFFECT OF RIGHT LIVING ON WORRY AND UNHAPPINESS

A very sad thing about some nervous people is the fact that in their lives there are domestic or other troubles which no physician can overcome. Some of them live in depressing surroundings, but for all these there is hope. There is no doubt that if we can restore the brain to a perfectly normal, healthful state the human being can bear more suffering than when the brain is affected. Perhaps when speaking of the spirit we had better call it that, rather than the brain, for that mysterious something we call spirit does make its home in the brain of man. This has been proven scientifically. So then, in this life the temple of the spirit, or soul, does affect the mind. And when I say this life, I

take the opportunity to say here that I not only believe in the immortality of the soul, but now, at 45, I am as certain of it as I am of my own existence. But for some reason—although as yet no one understands why it should do so—when this temple in which the spirit dwells is out of condition, it affects the soul or spirit. So, you see, if we can make the physical man or woman well, we most certainly can help the spirit that dwells within the body.

And so I recommend dieting, temperance in eating, and the careful chewing of food to all those sufferers who unfortunately live in depressing surroundings and cannot get away from them. When referring to the many pitiful letters I have received from poor human beings thus situated, I realize that I am treading on sacred ground. Such things are written, of course, to a physician in confidence and the confidence must therefore be forever

sacred. I have not only had letters from these unfortunate people, but have repeatedly come in contact with many of them in their every day life. I know well what added suffering such conditions bring to them.

I know of nothing in this world more pitiful than a noble, high-spirited, ambitious woman, pure and clean of heart, who marries a man and becomes the mother of his children and is then condemned to live the life of a mere animal. And all too frequently the opposite also obtains. Sometimes a man of high, pure purpose finds that he has chosen as the mother of his children a coarse, sensual woman. Now why in the world were these two people attracted to each other? This is one of life's biggest puzzles to those who have thought much along this line. In many instances extreme youth is the reason given. While youth is mating time, it also is the time of bad judgment. Thousands

of young people have made this dreadful mistake simply because they married too young. On the other hand, youth is not altogether to blame. When people, young or old, are courting, each individual endeavors to appear at his or her best before the other. Without being actually aware of it, under such circumstances both man and woman are doing all that lies in their power to deceive one another.

If people would do their courting in everyday clothes, and if the girl would go about her housework while the man looked on, or better still, if he helped her with it for one or two years, they would undoubtedly become better acquainted.

But, after all, except, perhaps, in unusual cases, there is absolutely nothing by which people know that they are going to be properly mated. If a man with a tendency to neurasthenia breaks down and is tied to a nagging wife, that is usually the last straw in the way of his recovery.

This is just as true of the woman who breaks down and has a nagging husband. There are, I regret to say, thousands of such cases all over the country. On the other hand I have had a man come to me and say that he was willing to do anything on earth to aid his wife, but he could not get her to diet or even to make a serious attempt to get well. I am always tremendously sorry for such a man because he has a mighty heavy burden to bear. Such a wife should try to get well as much for the man's sake as for her own. She should understand that she is needlessly torturing the one best friend she has on earth.

A woman of this kind should remember that, no matter how much she may suffer, she is hopelessly selfish if she will not do all in her power to diet and to obey other necessary rules that will enable her to get rid of the malady. Sometimes when a physician puts this before her kindly but

firmly it results in her making a beginning and by and by getting well. I have seen this happen many times. And I wish to say right here that while I believe I was born with some natural tact, yet if I had not gone through all this horrible suffering myself I should not, I know, be able to say the things that would induce these people to do that which it is their duty to do.

And here is one big difficulty I have always had to contend with. Some of these people have tried so many so-called nonsense cures — eating buttermilk tablets, for instance — and have had no benefit from them, that they are unwilling to try the one and only thing that will cure them — the thing that will cure them as sure as the sun shines. I wonder why it is that since the time of Christ people are always looking for a sensational or miraculous cure. Our life and everything pertaining to it is miracle enough, if we only had the sense to see it.

The woman or the man with "nerves" is not going to get well eating buttermilk tablets or taking patent dope while lying on a couch and shut in a house. You must bestir yourself. You must get out of doors, and above all, you must eat right. Today thousands of these people are languishing in hospitals and sanitariums, and most of them will come out only to go back again and again. The institutional treatment is good for the beginning of the cure, but if an individual with "nerves" is going to get well and stay well he must change his lifelong habits.

And I want to say again, that any person, man or woman, in the midst of depressing conditions can triumph over them if he will eat as he should and live as he should. There is something about the human soul, if it is pure and fine, and if proper attention is given to right living, that will enable a person to meet great sorrow and triumph over it. In fact, no

amount of sorrow can defeat a person who keeps his heart and body right.

And I would have you all realize that there is something far more to us than mere bones and veins and nerves. I know the terrible tendency of the one with "nerves" to get angry. But lay fast hold of yourself. Fight anger as you would poison, because in reality it is poison to your nerves. Anger will hurt you; it will hurt anybody. But no matter how hard you find it at first, get control of your temper. If you succeed in doing this in a year you will have won one of the greatest victories man can win in this world. I would rather meet a so-called plain man who has perfect control over his physical and mental faculties, and sit and talk quietly with him, than to meet the Prime Minister of England or the President of the United States if either lacked this control. For I say to you that no matter what others may say, the

true measure of success does not rest in the position you occupy but in your having complete control of yourself.

If you are to gain this control it means that each day you are confronted by a mighty big task, but if finally successful, you will have accomplished the greatest thing a man can do in this life. Now, here is something for you to take hold of, you who all these years have believed that your life ambition has been thwarted. But your ambition, let me tell you, has not been thwarted. Perhaps you have not done just what you wanted to do. But it's quite possible that you had no business trying to do that special thing anyway. Most of us, I find, can be greatly mistaken about what we think we want to do. At any rate, we can never be happy unless we gain entire control of ourselves.

This is something the person afflicted with "nerves" most certainly can do,

and he can use this terrible "thing" as I myself and thousands of others have used it as a ladder to climb to the sunlit peaks where worry and clouds and storms cannot trouble. And, after all, no matter who we are, no matter how poor or how rich we are, and no matter where we live, life holds about the same general possibilities for all of us. I mean by this that life affords to all the same opportunities for real happiness.

I know very well that there are those who will be quite unwilling to grant this, but it is as true as the life we live. Many people in this old world still hold the notion that those who roll in wealth are the happy ones. But I say to you this notion is all wrong, and from knowledge gained through experience I know that in their hearts many of these wealthy people are dissatisfied and not one whit happier than you are. The most restless people, the most unhappy people, and the

most thoroughly dissatisfied people that I have ever met have been people who had everything that riches could give them.

Andrew Carnegie said he had noticed that after a man had accumulated a million dollars smiles were seldom seen on his face. I cannot understand why people insist on going through life making themselves and all those they really love miserable just because they do not happen to have riches.

And a great many high-strung sensitive men are utterly cast down because they have failed to acquire wealth by the time they are forty-five or fifty years of age.

I wish I could make all such poor, afflicted people see what goes to make up happiness and learn the only way to be happy. In order to get well the thing we have to do is to follow nature's simple rules—rules our Creator gave to us. We

must get control not only of our appetites but of all such passions as anger, hate, and envy, which poison our bodies. And let us also cast suspicion out of our minds. This is a good rule to observe: Never suspect folks. It is useless, anyway, for by and by what they are or what they do is always bound to come to the surface.

By gaining perfect control over yourself—and most certainly to do so is worth every effort you may make—you will also gain patience, and that is, I think, one of the crowning virtues. Sometimes I think it the greatest of all virtues. Certainly it stands very high in the perfecting of character.

To the sufferer with “nerves” I would say: Have the courage to believe that you are going to get well. Then you can do it. No matter how depressing or discouraging your surroundings, do the very best you can every day. Then, no matter what your ideas of success may have been,

you are really succeeding wonderfully! See that you keep right on doing it! If you are a mother and have children, live for them. Or if you are a father and have children, and have met with disappointments, live for those children! Do everything in your power to make them happy, high of heart, and gallant of soul. Do not live for yourself, live for your children. If you have no children of your own, look about and get interested in some other person's children. You will find a lot of children all around you—blessed little beings—that you can help to make happy. Get your mind off yourself and your troubles and on the children of this world, and keep it there.

When you were a child no doubt you had many happy days. Some of us had a very happy childhood, while others may have been denied what their hearts desired. But if we did not have a happy childhood that is all the more reason why

we should be glad to help some other little ones have a happy one. More and more each year I live I come to believe that it depends entirely upon grown people whether in this world children are happy or not happy.

If you had a happy childhood—and most people had—do you not recall the glorious times you had? I know you do, for we all do. And I know, too, how much people affected with nerves dwell on those memories, and how much they wish they might go back to those blessed days when the sun was always shining and the birds were always singing and the streams always beckoning them to play along their sands.

Do you realize that you can live in those days again? I do, and I go back and dwell in them more and more the older I get. I do not mean that I am not looking forward, for I am, tremendously.

How stupid we poor miserable creatures of this world become after we leave our childhood days behind us! We really should never lose sight of them. I have said that the person afflicted with "nerves" should not run. I did not quite mean all that implies. After such a man has recovered, if he has a good heart, he should run a little. I run; I can't help it. I feel so good I have to run a little now and then to work off steam. But you know very well when most people see a man running they at once think a house is afire somewhere.

It is almost unbelievable that we should actually surround ourselves with so many utterly senseless customs that tend to nothing but misery and unhappiness. We should dress for comfort, and we should have the courage to live in a youthful world where all may be happy. "If the blind lead the blind," so the Bible tells us, "both shall fall into the ditch." We

need so to live and act that we shall not fail to be happy. Happiness really is what everybody is chasing, but how very far away from it most people are getting! Go back to the memories of your childhood. Be with children and play with them all you possibly can. If you are a mother, begin this very day to exercise more patience with your children, recalling over and over again that when you were a child you were just as they are. And remember, for it is only too true, that the day is fast coming when your little boy will no longer be a little boy, he will be a man, and will have gone away from you. Then many times you will wish him back, and you will look back on those days when you thought your nerves were being ruined, and feel a great swelling in your breast, and breathing a sigh, whisper to yourself, "Dear God, I hope I did all I ought to have done for him while he was little."

I know that any one can live with children and find happiness in being one with them, and I know of no better thing to do. After we have hold of ourselves with a firm grip we should endeavor to do this.

I have had people suffering with "nerves" tell me they had lost a little boy or a little girl, and that it seems impossible to get over this loss. I cannot tell you how much I long to help such people. But I always urge them to go right on playing with other children and to remember, for to me it is certain truth, that they will meet that little child again. There should be nothing to grieve about in such a loss. To find compensation, the one who has had such a grief has only to keep on playing the part of a true man or true woman. Childhood with all its pains and pleasures is everywhere about us. And childhood is only the beginning of immortality.

Late one night, a number of years ago, I was sitting in a little restaurant in a western town, and was feeling very lonely and miserable. Sorrow weighed heavily upon me that night and the world never seemed blacker, yet I think my belief in the immortality of the soul had never been more certain. I looked up and high on the smoke-stained wall hung a painted picture of an old-time ship with many sails set. This painting pictured the ship sailing through the darkness of night. But through the dark, seemingly restless clouds the moon gleamed brightly on the white canvas of the sails.

I had never before been so powerfully impressed by any picture. It seemed fairly to speak to me. I took an envelope from my pocket and set down the verses given here. These verses were afterwards published in one or two metropolitan papers. Mr. James Bryce, then English Ambassador at Washington, saw

them and wrote me a beautiful letter about them, in which he said, "Your little poem 'The Last Journey' attracts me very much." You see he was beginning to grow old, and I knew that was the reason these lines of mine had made an appeal to him.

Not very long after this I also had a letter about the verses from Dr. Osler, then Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. In it he said, "I have read your little poem 'The Last Journey' with unusual interest." And again I knew why. You see, it does not matter very much what our rank or our station here, no matter whether a human being is a king or what his station in life may be, he still is a human being. We are all reaching out after the same great thing. The fine thing about the sentiment of these little verses is that although you wish to and may not believe it, it is coming true anyway.

THE LAST JOURNEY

One night when in a youthful dream,
I saw a moonlit sea,
And sailing o'er its dark expanse,
A ship of mystery.

The lonely traveler seemed to be
On some great mission bound,
As o'er the darkened waters
It sailed without a sound.

Long years have passed; old age has come:
The fire of life is low.
Again I think of that strange dream
Of youth so long ago.

And in the ship that swiftly sailed
That silent moonlit sea,
I seem to see a storm-tossed soul
Bound for eternity.

Now to my mind this sweet dream comes,
A peaceful memory,
For soon I'll be A YOUTH again,
With Immortality!

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